

# **Animal Health Safeguarding Review Implementation Progress Report October 2003**

## **I. Progress achieved in implementing the review:**

### Surveillance

- National Animal Health Reporting System– In late September, the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) Steering Committee held a conference call. Current NAHRS activities were discussed and a general direction for 2004 was developed. The Steering Committee includes representatives from the United States Animal Health Association, the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, State Veterinarians, commodity groups, and APHIS. Safeguarding Review recommendation #98 addresses the NAHRS.
- Foreign animal disease investigation reporting system– VS is taking steps to transfer all foreign animal disease investigations into the web-based Emergency Management Reporting System by January 1, 2004. Both State and Federal officials will be able to enter data into this system. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations address enhancing foreign animal disease investigations (#s 7 and 8).

### Response

- Emergency response corps – As of October 2003, VS has developed a nearly 1,600 member National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps of private veterinarians and animal health technicians. These individuals are available to assist during animal health emergencies and to interface with the private livestock sector. The new VS Area Emergency Coordinators will be working with these state-based personnel for training and deployment coordination purposes. Safeguarding Review recommendation #114 calls for the creation of national personnel pools of emergency responders from the ranks of retired state and federal animal health officials, other government agencies, skilled private practitioners, non-veterinarians with specific skills, and appraisers.
- Emergency coordinators receive training – An orientation and training session was held during the United States Animal Health Association meeting for the new Area Emergency Coordinators. During the session, the guidelines under which the AECs will operate and how the AECs will integrate into existing emergency management systems in their areas were discussed. Safeguarding Review recommendations #s 105, 111, and 123 call for continuing cooperative efforts to improve emergency response.

- Homeland security exercises – Thirty-five North Dakota counties and four tribes participated in a Homeland Security Functional Exercise at the end of September. The jurisdictions dealt with a credible threat scenario and then the results of an explosion that spread a chemical agent causing a mass casualty incident. Safeguarding Review recommendation #105 calls for continued cooperative response efforts.

#### Exclusion

- Developing animal health capacities overseas – An Epidemiology in Action class was presented to Nigerian veterinarians in late September. The class was organized in collaboration with International Services and the United States Agency for International Development. The Epidemiology in Action course continued training begun in Nigeria in August 2002. Safeguarding Review recommendation #48 encourages increased assistance in foreign countries as a means of protecting the United States from foreign animal diseases.
- Collecting and reporting international health information – In October, Intellibridge initiated a pilot project to provide APHIS with open source information regarding global animal and plant health events. The pilot will run for four months. Numerous Safeguarding Review recommendations call improved gathering and use of international animal health information (#s 31, 87, 89, 90, 91).

#### Information Technology

- Electronic Commerce – VS met the October 2003 deadline for making fourteen commonly used government forms available to the public in electronic format. These forms can be retrieved from the VS home page and completed electronically. Work has been initiated to automate the processes through which the information on these forms is referenced and managed. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations address making better use of technology and electronic availability of information (#s 77, 81).

## **II. Implementation activities:**

The Organizational Dynamics/Communications Issue Group held a conference call in October and will meet in Atlanta the week of December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Coordinated Response Issue Group held a conference call on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Laboratory Systems Issue Group will be meeting the week of January 5<sup>th</sup> in Davis, California.

---

*Comments and questions regarding this report can be directed to Carol Tuszynski at Area Code (970) 494-7320.*

